

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IRELAND



Reference Code:	2012/59/1775
Creation Date(s):	22 July 1982
Extent and medium:	3 pages
Creator(s):	Department of Foreign Affairs
Access Conditions:	Open
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*Mr. J. M. [unclear]
Pl. p.a. on Washington
and friends of*

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URGENT
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INITIALS.

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and friend

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COPY OF SHARKEY TLX TO HQ FOLLOWS

AS CONFIRMED BY THE BRITISH EMBASSY TODAY, THE PURPOSE OF THE VISIT WAS TO EXPLAIN THE MOTIVATION BEHIND THE PRIOR INITIATIVE AND ENCOURAGE AMERICAN INVESTMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND. THE BRITISH FEEL "THE VISIT HAS GONE WELL" AND PRIOR WILL UNDOUBTEDLY REPRESENT IT AS A SUCCESS.

THE VISIT COINCIDED WITH THE NEWS OF THE BOMBINGS IN LONDON WHICH WERE HEADLINE STORIES ON RADIO AND TV YESTERDAY AND IN THE PRESS TODAY. THE KILLINGS UNDOUBTEDLY HELPED PRIOR'S PRESENTATION, ABOVE ALL WITH THE PRESS, FACILITATING HIS IMAGE AS A DETERMINED HONEST BROKER STRUGGLING GAMELY TO FILL THE POLITICAL VACUUM IN NORTHERN IRELAND IN THE FACE OF OPPOSITION FROM THE POLITICAL PARTIES. IN IMAGE TERMS, MOREOVER, PRIOR APPARENTLY CAME ACROSS WELL. ACCORDING TO ONE PRESS CONTACT, HE SEEMED DIFFERENT FROM "THE USUAL ARROGANT BRITISH POLITICIAN," HE WAS STUDIED AND REFLECTIVE IN PUTTING FORWARD HIS VIEWPOINT. IN HIS MEETINGS WITH POLITICIANS HE WAS CAREFUL TO AVOID CONFRONTATION AND TO MAINTAIN AT ALL TIMES THE FIGURE OF A REASONABLE AND SINCERELY MOTIVATED MAN. "COOL AND CLEVER" WAS HOW ONE HILL CONTACT DESCRIBED IT.

7

THE FOLLOWING ATTENDED THE DINNER AT THE BRITISH EMBASSY: JUDGE CLARK, SENATORS LUGAR (CHAIRMAN OF THE FOREIGN RELATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE ON EUROPE) MOYNIHAN AND ODD; REPRESENTATIVES FOLEY AND SHANNON, LARRY EAGLEBURGER OF D/STATE AND LANE KIRKLAND, HEAD OF THE AFL/CIO. SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION WAS CENTRED ESSENTIALLY ON THE AFTER-DINNER STAGE AND DID NOT ALLOW FOR A DETAILED REVIEW ON IRELAND. IRISH AFFAIRS, FOR SOME REASON, WERE OBLIGED TO COMPETE WITH TWO OTHER THEMES (VIZ LABOUR RELATIONS AND THE MIDDLE EAST). AT THE DINNER, PRIOR PRESENTED HIS VIEW OF HIS INITIATIVE. HE WAS QUESTIONED ABOUT OTHER APPROACHES AND ABOUT THE PROBLEMS OF THE MINORITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND BY DODD AND MOYNIHAN (E.G. ON THE UDA, ON THE NEED FOR DEMOCRACY TO GUARANTEE AND DEFEND THE RIGHTS OF MINORITIES). FOLEY ARGUED HIS CONCERNS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF NATIONALIST OPINION IN IRELAND AND THE NATIONALIST CASE GENERALLY. CLARK DID NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE DISCUSSION.

WE HAVE REPORTED ALREADY ON PRIOR'S PRESS LUNCH AND ON THE MEETING WITH THE FOI. THESE FOLLOWED AFTER THE LONDON BOMBINGS. THUS, THE MEETING WITH THE FOI WAS RESTRAINED AND POLITE IN ITS ATMOSPHERE THOUGH, AS YOU WILL HAVE SEEN, WAS CLOSELY QUESTIONED ON A NUMBER OF POINTS. NO PHOTOGRAPHERS WERE ADMITTED. IN GENERAL, ENGLISH POLITICIANS ARE NOT A BIG DRAW ON THE HILL AND THE TURNOUT AS REPORTED WAS DUE TO THE EFFORTS OF CONGRESSMAN JIM SHANNON TO ENSURE THAT PRIOR SHOULD MEET AT LEAST SOME OF THE FRIENDS BY WAY OF RECIPROCITY FOR PRIOR'S MEETING HIM IN LONDON. THE IMPACT WHICH PRIOR MADE AT THE FOI HAD MORE TO DO WITH HIS PERSONAL ABILITIES THAN WITH THE SUBSTANCE OF HIS CASE. AMONG OUR FRIENDS ON THE HILL, THE BRITISH TEND TO FACE AN UP-HILL TASK IN PERSUADING THEIR INTERLOCUTEURS OF THEIR SINCERITY AND EVEN-HANDEDNESS. AND, GENERALLY, PRIOR WOULD HAVE SEEN BOTH AT THE DINNER AND AT THE MEETING OF THE FOI THAT THE NATIONALIST CASE REMAINS THE POPULAR ONE WITH IRISH-AMERICAN POLITICIANS.

SPEAKER O'NEILL DID NOT COME TO THE MEETING OF FOI - HE HAS GENERALLY LITTLE INTEREST IN MEETING ENGLISH POLITICIANS. KENNEDY HAD INTENDED TO "DROP IN" ON THE MEETING BUT DID NOT DO SO IN THE EVENT BECAUSE OF OTHER PRESSURES. IT MAY ALSO BE THAT THE LONDON BOMBINGS MADE HIM HESITANT TO MEET PRIOR IN THE ADVERSARIAL ROLE INITIALLY ENVISAGED.

TURN OUT FOR THE MEETING OF THE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE WAS NOT GOOD. IN ADDITION TO CHAIRMAN ZABLOCKI, LEE HAMILTON (CHAIRMAN OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST) BROOMFIELD, THE RANKING REPUBLICAN MINORITY MEMBER, ONLY DORNAN, FENWICK, GILMAN, AND BIAGGI TURNED UP. THE MEETING GAVE PRIOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT HIS CASE, AND AGAIN HE WAS IMPRESSIVE ON THE LEVEL OF PERSONAL ABILITY. HE WAS QUESTIONED BY ZABLOCKI (ON THE LIMITED NATURE OF THE CONSULTATION SOUGHT ON HIS INITIATIVE), BY GILMAN ON WHETHER THERE WOULD BE ANY TEST OF PUBLIC OPINION IN NORTHERN IRELAND ON THE INITIATIVE PRIOR TO ACTUAL ELECTIONS AND BY BIAGGI AS TO WHETHER HE THOUGHT U.S. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND WOULD BE A GOOD THING, AND BY DORNAN ON THE UDA. -IN REPLYING POSITIVELY TO THE BIAGGI QUERY, PRIOR SEEMED UNAWARE ABOUT THE BIAGGI PROPOSAL FOR U.S. ECONOMIC AID FOR NORTHERN IRELAND SUBJECT TO A BRITISH DECLARATION ON WITHDRAWAL. PRIOR RESPONDED TO OTHER QUERIES IN A LOW-KEY WAY, ALWAYS PRESENTING HIMSELF VERY MUCH AS THE REASONABLE MAN IN THE MIDDLE. HE WAS APPARENTLY SOMEWHAT DEFENSIVE IN HIS REPLY TO THE QUESTION FROM ZABLOCKI ON CONSULTATION PROCEDURES BUT GOT OFF THE HOOK WHEN ANOTHER QUESTIONER INTERVENED.

OVERALL, IT IS CLEAR THAT PRIOR'S VISIT, HIS CASE AND HIS PRESENTATION WERE ASSISTED BY THE BOMBINGS IN LONDON WHICH FOCUSED FRONT-PAGE ATTENTION ONCE AGAIN ON NORTHERN IRELAND

AND ENABLED HIM TO OFFER HIS INITIATIVE AS A LIGHT IN THE TUNNEL. THE NEW YORK TIMES EDITORIAL TODAY OBVIOUSLY REFLECTS THAT PERCEPTION. PRIOR'S IMPACT ON THE HILL AS DISTINCT FROM THE MEDIA IS OF COURSE MORE DOUBTFUL. BUT, WILL BE IMPORTANT THAT LEADING SPOKESMEN FOR THE GOVERNMENT AND FOR THE NATIONALIST CASE IN GENERAL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT THEIR VIEW TO OUR FRIENDS IN CONGRESS AND TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE THROUGH TELEVISION IN THE MONTHS AHEAD DURING VISITS TO THE UNITED STATES. IN THIS CONNECTION, THE DEPARTMENT CAN ALSO ASSIST BY ENCOURAGING OP ED PIECES FROM LEADING OBSERVERS OF THE IRISH SCENE FOR PLACEMENT IN THE MAJOR AMERICAN DAILIES.

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